

Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
“Backpage.com’s Knowing Facilitation of Online Sex Trafficking”
Hearing of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
January 10, 2017

I would like to thank Chairman Portman and Ranking Member McCaskill for holding this important hearing. Over the past year and a half, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has worked diligently to investigate human sex trafficking on the Internet. I commend both Chairman Portman and Ranking Member McCaskill for their tireless work in pursuing this investigation and uncovering the information presented today.

Our Committee has a long history of investigation and bipartisanship. Both are on display here. Last February, this Committee unanimously approved a resolution to enforce the Subcommittee’s subpoena for information. Then the full Senate unanimously approved it. The information turned over pursuant to that subpoena was instrumental in allowing the Subcommittee to complete its investigation. This is an example of what we can achieve when we find areas of agreement.

The findings presented today will help Congress better understand some of the reasons for the proliferation of sex trafficking in the digital age. I appreciate the powerful testimony from the family members of the victims of online sex trafficking. Thank you for telling your stories. I hope this investigation and today’s hearing are just the first steps in developing legislative proposals to combat this scourge.